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C O N F I D E N T I A L PRAGUE 000860

SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: CZECH DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER ON EU AND ARMS  
EXPORT CONSULTATIVE MECHANISM.

Classified By: CLASSIFIED BY ECON OFFICER SAMSON FOR REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D).

1.(C) SUMMARY: The Czech Republic will focus on developments in Belarus and Moldova at the June 10 "Visegrad 4" meeting. According to Deputy FM Winkler, lessons learned from the recent events in Ukraine and Kyrgyzstan underline that the EU needs to improve its capacity to respond to opportunities and that the EU underestimated the potential for change. Winkler signaled that the Czechs will again submit a proposal to the USG to sell a modified version of the VERA passive radar to Vietnam. He also confirmed that the Czech government will continue to use the consultative process with the USG after his departure this summer. END SUMMARY

2. (C) The June 10 meeting in Poland of "Visegrad 4" (V4) prime ministers will include Ukraine. The Czech Republic will focus on the situation in Belarus and Moldova and they hope to offer assistance to the development of democratic reform in these countries. Winkler is skeptical that the current leadership in these countries is in a position to make significant strides forward, but agreed that the Czech Republic is in a good position to promote a transition to democracy based on its own experiences. Winkler is concerned that Russia regards Belarus as a country that it "cannot lose" and that steps need to be taken by the EU, the US, and neighboring countries to assure Russia that democratic change in Belarus is not a threat, but rather a gain for all.

3. (C) Winkler believes that the EU was poorly prepared for the events in Ukraine. The messages sent from the EU were muddled and slow. He noted that the EU urged against street demonstrations, and then did not support the second round of voting. His hope is that in the future, the EU will do a better job of reaching out to Ukraine and encouraging their democratic and market development. A systematic review of "lessons learned" from the Orange Revolution in Ukraine and the movement in Kyrgyzstan is crucial if the EU is to improve its ability to communicate effectively and with one voice in moments of political crisis.

4. (C) Regarding the recent votes on the European Constitution, Winkler believes that a direct result of this will be a delay in negotiations to enlarge the EU. He anticipates that the entry of Romania and Bulgaria will be pushed back, and that politicians will regard the unsuccessful referenda in France and the Netherlands as clear indications that voters are unhappy with further expansion of the EU.

5. (C) The consultative process established last year to review with the USG, in advance, sales of sensitive military technology such as the VERA passive surveillance system, will remain in place after Winkler's departure this summer (Note: Winkler expects to be nominated to be the Czech Ambassador to the UK). Winkler mentioned that current MFA political Director Martin Povejsil is likely to move up to a Deputy Minister position in the near future, and that he, rather than the incoming First Deputy FM Jaroslav Basta (currently Czech Ambassador to Moscow), will likely handle the security portfolio. SepTel will discuss possible VERA sale to Vietnam. CABANISS